

2021 Annual Report to the Board of Forestry



Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Habitat Section
February 2022

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2021 OVERVIEW

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Habitat Section submits our 2021 annual report to the Board of Forestry. This report summarizes our January 1 – December 31, 2021, forestry-related activities and informs the Board of Forestry of Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (FRPA) effectiveness protecting the resources and habitats for which ADF&G has responsibility.

Alaska Statutes require ADF&G to manage, protect, maintain, improve, and extend the fish, game, and aquatic plant resources of the state in the interest of the economy and general well-being of the State (AS 16.05.020), to ensure the proper protection of anadromous fish habitat (AS 16.05.871), and to provide fish passage (AS 16.05.841).

On public lands, FRPA^a requires the maintenance of important fish and wildlife habitats. The state forester recognizes the expertise of ADF&G regarding fish and wildlife habitat on all lands with fish habitat as the primary value in riparian areas.^b ADF&G helps identify and protect important wildlife habitats on private lands and provides technical expertise for voluntary management techniques that minimize adverse effects on wildlife habitat.^c

PRIVATE AND MUNICIPAL LAND

Table 1 contains FRPA activity on private, municipal, and trust land.

Southeast Region

Craig staff reviewed and commented on 17 detailed plans of operation (DPOs) for commercial timber harvest and road construction on private timber lands, reviewed three changes in operations, processed five renewals, and conducted six FRPA inspections.

Douglas staff commented on four DPOs for timber harvest and road construction on Yak-Tat Kwaan Land and one for timber harvest and road construction on Mental Health Trust Land in Gustavus; conducted three field inspections for Yak Timber operations in Yakutat; issued three fish habitat permits for bridges and culverts in Yakutat, two fish habitat permits for removing or replacing logging road structures on Huna Totem land; and surveyed 112 streams for anadromous fish presence on Yak-Tat Kwaan, Shee Atika, Sealaska Corporation, and Huna Totem land.

Southcentral Region

Anchorage staff reviewed and commented on two DPOs for commercial timber harvest and issued four fish habitat permits for culvert installation and a vehicle stream crossing on Afognak Native Corporation lands. No FRPA inspections were completed due to Covid-19 travel restrictions.

Palmer staff reviewed on two DPOs for commercial timber harvest in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough; no fish habitat permits were required.

Interior Region

One DPO was reviewed in the interior region.

^a AS 41.17.060 (c)(7)

^b AS 41.17.098 (d)

^c AS 41.17.910 (b) and (c).

STATE LAND

Table 2 contains FRPA activities on State land.

Southeast Region

Douglas staff surveyed two streams for anadromous fish on State land in Southern Southeast where future harvest may occur.

Southcentral Region

Palmer staff reviewed one contract for commercial timber harvest on state land, no fish habitat permits were required.

Interior Region

Fairbanks staff reviewed and commented on one DPO renewal, three FLUPs and one Best Interest Findings, eight personal use firewood permits, two firebreak projects, and issued three fish habitat permits for winter equipment crossings and one permit for an active wildland fire suppression operation.

FEDERAL LAND

Table 3 contains activities on federal land.

Southeast Region

Craig staff reviewed six projects under the general concurrence and issued two individual concurrences for culvert installations on Prince of Wales Island (POW). One fish habitat concurrence was issued for stream restoration at Margaret Creek near Ketchikan. Staff conducted six inspections of aquatic organism passage (AOP) structure installations and one inspection of the Nahania Creek restoration project on POW, and provided comments on the proposed Prince of Wales Landscape Level Analysis.

Douglas staff issued six fish habitat concurrences for stream restoration at the Nakwasina River and Appleton Cove and surveyed 27 streams on Tongass National Forest Land for anadromous fish.

Southcentral Region

No activity reported.

Interior Region

No activity reported.

FOREST PRACTICES IMPLEMENTATION

COMPLIANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING

Habitat staff participated with the Division of Forestry monitoring FRPA compliance and effectiveness.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

ANADROMOUS WATERS CATALOG

Douglas staff continued field work to catalog anadromous streams on Prince of Wales Island, the Hoonah road system, and Tongass National Forest Land throughout Southeast Alaska under two Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund grant projects. Surveys targeted timber lands and relict logging road systems.

TONGASS COMPLIANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING

In a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Habitat Section and USFS Alaska Region, USFS Agreement No. 194-MU-11100100-108, ADF&G agrees to participate annually in BMP monitoring field visits.

TONGASS FISH PASSAGE

ADF&G continues to work with the USFS to evaluate fish passage across the forest and prioritize fish passage restoration projects.

BUDGET AND PERSONNEL

BUDGET

ADF&G funding for FRPA activities conducted during calendar year 2021 came from state general funds. The Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund provided funding to identify and nominate freshwater anadromous fish habitat to the AWC in areas where we anticipate timber harvest.

PERSONNEL

New Hires

Karen Vasquez, Administrative Assistant I, Fairbanks

Olivia Edwards, Habitat Biologist I, Fairbanks

Sarah Myers, Habitat Biologist IV, Palmer*

George Hoden, Habitat Biologist III, Palmer

Crystal Moenaert, Habitat Biologist II, Palmer

Andrew Kastning, Habitat Biologist II, Anchorage

Andi Parrott, F&G Program Technician, Anchorage

Tony Munter, Habitat Biologist IV, Kenai*

Kaitlynn Cafferty, Habitat Biologist I, Kenai

Resignations

Kelsey Dean, Habitat Biologist I, Douglas

Jonathan Kirsch, Habitat Biologist IV, Palmer

Amy Russell, F&G Program Technician, Anchorage

STATEMENT OF FRPA EFFECTIVENESS

ADF&G considers FRPA and its regulations effective for maintaining fish habitat within the classified surface water types during forestry related activities. The Habitat Section works cooperatively with the Division of Forestry, the Department of Environmental Conservation, landowners and operators to implement FRPA to protect important fish habitat, water quality, and important wildlife habitat from the effects of timber harvest activities.

CALENDAR YEAR 2022

WORKLOAD PRIORITIES

FRPA participation remains a Habitat Section workload priority in addition to anadromous waters cataloging, fish habitat and special area permitting, special area planning, large projects of importance to the State, and research to aid in permitting decisions. Habitat Section staff continue to work with the Divisions of Sport Fish, Commercial Fisheries, and Wildlife Conservation, and the Division of Forestry, to identify fish bearing waters and important wildlife habitat on timberlands, participate in forestry reviews, and conduct forestry related fieldwork. Douglas staff are developing a GIS tool and evaluating its effectiveness for identifying riparian stand susceptibility to windthrow, sharing their findings with the Board of Forestry and industry partners.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

If requested, the Habitat Section will participate in Division of Forestry-sponsored training for agency staff and operators to describe fish habitat permitting under the Anadromous Fish and Fishway Acts and strategies to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts to important fish and wildlife resources and habitats.

Habitat staff continues to assist Division of Wildlife Conservation staff with updating important habitat components, concerns, and harvest techniques for loggers and personal use firewood harvesters for consistency with our comments to DOF and provide information to the public for practices of “good stewardship” when harvesting forest resources.

Table 1.–FRPA activities on private, municipal, and trust land.

Area	DPO	Renewals	Change in Operations	Variation Requests	Variation Inspections	Other FRPA Inspections	FHPs Issued	AWC Updates
Southern Southeast	Keete Inlet (1) – STC	Long Islad (1) – LIT	Kasaan (1) – Alcan					
	Polk Inlet (1) – STC	McKenzie Inlet (1) – STC	Tuxekan (1) -- STC					
	Tuxekan (1) – STC	Kasaan (2) – Kivilco	Polk Inlet (1) -- STC					
	Yatuk Creek (5) – Viking	Tuxekan Island (1) – STC						
	Naukati (3) -- Viking							
	Cleva Bay (1) -- Alcan							
	Vallenar Bay (2) -- Alcan							
	Kasaan Peninsula (2) – Alcan							
	George Inlet (1) -- Alcan							
Northern Southeast	Yak-Tat Kwaan (4)	Yak-Tat Kwann (2)					Yakutat (103)	112
	Mental Health Trust (1)	Huna Totem (1)						
Anchorage	Afognak Native Corp – ANC Land (2)					Afognak Native Corp – ANC Land (4)		
Fairbanks	Gana-A’Yoo, Limited	SEGA Continued Winter Harvest						
Palmer	Church Road (MSS-21-002)							
	Yoder Road							

Table 2.—FRPA activities on state land.

Area	BIFS	SFMP	FYSTS	FLUP	Personal Use Firewood	House Log Sales	FRPA Inspections	FHPs Issued	AWC Updates
Southern Southeast									
Northern Southeast									2
Soldotna			Kenai Area						
Palmer	Willow (SC-3154M)								
Anchorage									
Fairbanks	Win Lake #2 (NC-1609-F) Nenana Spruce #3 and 4 (NC-1801, 02-F)			Nenana River (NC-1801, 02, 03, 04-F)	8			Tanana River Winter Crossings (3) Chena River Summer Crossing (1)	

Table 3.–Activities on federal land.

Area	NEPA	Field Visits	Concurrences
Southern Southeast		Restoration Inspection (1) – TRD	Bridges (2) – TRD
		Bridge/Culvert Inspections (6) – TRD	Culverts (4) – TRD
			Restoration (1) – TRD
Northern Southeast			Stream Restoration (6)

Email Cc:

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